

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel Claims 1-9.

Please add new Claims 10-15:

1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (New) A method comprising polishing a composite material containing silica and silicon nitride with an acidic polishing slurry comprising:

(a) from about 0.1 to about 5%, by weight, of a colloidal silica abrasive,

(b) from about 0.5 to about 10%, by weight, of a fluoride salt

wherein the colloidal silica abrasive is present in a quantity ranging from about 0.1 to about 3.5% by weight and the fluoride salt is present in a quantity of from about 1 to about 6%, by weight, and

(c) wherein the slurry has a pH ranging from about 2 to about 6.

11. (New) The polishing slurry according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is an ammonium salt.

12. (New) The polishing slurry according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is ammonium fluoride or ammonium hydrogen fluoride.

13. (New) The polishing slurry according to Claim 10, wherein the fluoride salt is ammonium hydrogen fluoride.

14. (New) The polishing slurry according to Claim 10, wherein the colloidal silica has a mean particle size of from about 10 nm to about 1  $\mu$ m.

15. (New) The polishing slurry according to Claim 14, wherein the colloidal silica has a mean particle size of from about 20 nm to about 100 nm.

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